

Community Development Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of December 11, 2019

Subject: Livable Communities Demonstration Account Transit-Oriented Development Pre-Development Funding Recommendations

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Award one Livable Communities Demonstration Account Transit-Oriented Development Pre-Development grant totaling \$100,000, as shown in the table below.
2. Authorize its Community Development Division Director to execute the grant agreements on behalf of the Council.

| Recommended Projects | Applicant | Award Amount |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| River Balcony Schematic Design | City of Saint Paul | \$100,000 |
| Total Recommended | | \$100,000 |
| Total Available | | \$250,000 |
| Total Remaining | | \$150,000 |

Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Senior Planner Hannah Gary presented the staff report to the committee. Council Members had questions about future availability of the remaining funds and reasons for the low subscription level this cycle. Additional funds may be made available for future cycles. Fund availability is outlined in the Fund Distribution Plan, which is presented to and adopted by the Committee on an annual basis. The number of applications coming into the program fluctuates. Staff indicated that they will explore ways to encourage more applications in future cycles.

A Council Member had a question about applicant intention to use DBE certified businesses in the project. Staff will provide specific details after the meeting.

There was additional discussion about tracking intended DBE use as well as how affordable housing is considered in the scoring process as it is a priority for the Council.

The recommendation passed unanimously.

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: December 2, 2019

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of December 11, 2019

Subject: Livable Communities Demonstration Account Transit-Oriented Development Pre-Development Funding Recommendations

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minnesota Statute § 473.253

Staff Prepared/Presented: Hannah Gary, Senior Planner, Livable Communities, (651) 602-1633

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Award one Livable Communities Demonstration Account Transit-Oriented Development Pre-Development grant totaling \$100,000, as shown in the table below.
2. Authorize its Community Development Division Director to execute the grant agreements on behalf of the Council.

Table 1. Livable Communities Demonstration Account Transit-Oriented Development Pre-Development Awards

| Recommended Projects | Applicant | Award Amount |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| River Balcony Schematic Design | City of Saint Paul | \$100,000 |
| Total Recommended | | \$100,000 |
| Total Available | | \$250,000 |
| Total Remaining | | \$150,000 |

Background

The Metropolitan Council has identified advancing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) along existing and emerging transitways as a priority. The Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) TOD grant category supports development activities in identified TOD areas. The Council adopted the 2019 Livable Communities Act TOD guidelines, criteria, schedule, and evaluation process as part of the 2019 Livable Communities Fund Distribution Plan ([Business Item 2019-33](#)) on February 13, 2019. The Fund Distribution Plan specifies a one-step staff evaluation process for TOD Pre-Development and TOD Zoning Implementation grants. A team of staff from the Community Development Division reviews pre-development applications.

Rationale

On November 1, 2019, the Council received one application for the fall round of LCDA-TOD Pre-Development funding. The staff evaluation concluded that the application met the minimum scoring threshold to be recommended for funding. Further detail is represented in the attached Review Record.

Thrive Lens Analysis

Projects that leverage regional infrastructure investments by helping increase densities and provide a mix of uses further the Thrive Stewardship Outcome.

Projects that redevelop and increase density, especially near transit stations, further the Thrive Prosperity outcome of “Encouraging redevelopment and infill development across the region.”

Projects that help produce jobs near transit further the Thrive Equity outcome of “using our influence and investments to build a more equitable region.”

Projects located near transit and that include a mix of housing and jobs further the Thrive Livability outcome of “Aligning resources to support transit-oriented development and walkable, urban places.”

Funding

The Council has programmed up to \$500,000 for LCDA Pre-Development awards in the [Fund Distribution Plan](#) and the adopted Council budget. A total of \$172,000 was awarded in the spring funding round. Staff is recommending fully funding the single application in this round for a total of \$100,000. The remaining balance will be available for future solicitations.

Known Support / Opposition

The applicant community submitted a resolution of support. While there is currently no known public opposition to the project, the applicant anticipates potential opposition to proposed public investments. The applicant is current developing a community engagement plan for the project.

Review Process

The Council issued a notice of funding availability in March 2019 following adoption of the 2019 Annual Livable Communities Fund Distribution Plan. Staff held meetings to familiarize applicants with the LCA-TOD process and criteria.

One application was submitted as shown in Table 2. Community Development staff conducted a preliminary review for completeness and eligibility, then used Council-approved criteria to evaluate each application in the following areas: transit accessibility, walkability, ridership; TOD design; catalytic potential; readiness and partnerships. The application met the 45-point minimum score. The score represented in the table below includes the Housing Performance Score for the City of Saint Paul. Full funding is being recommended for the requests.

Table 2. LCDA-TOD Pre-Development Application Scoring Summary

| Project | Applicant | Points (75 pts. possible; minimum 45 pts.) | Amount Requested | Amount Recommended |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------|
| River Balcony Schematic Design | City of Saint Paul | 55 | \$100,000 | \$100,000 |
| | | | Total Requested | \$100,000 |
| | | | Total Recommended | \$100,000 |
| | | | Total Available | \$250,000 |
| | | | Total Remaining | \$150,000 |

Projects Recommended for Funding

The project summary for the project recommended for funding is on the following page.

Livable Communities Project Summary

Grant # SG
Type: TOD Pre-Development
Applicant: City of Saint Paul
Project Name: River Balcony Schematic Design
Council District: District 13 – Chai Lee

| Project Detail | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Project Overview | This is a combination of projects that seeks to better connect downtown Saint Paul to the Mississippi River. The project will include both rental and housing units, office space, a hotel, restaurant space, outdoor public gathering space, and an urban promenade. |
| Comments/ Demonstration value | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is demonstration value in creating a cohesive downtown development plan to provide outdoor public space and connect downtown uses to the Mississippi River. • This project serves as an example of strong partnerships coming together on a larger development project. |
| Funding Request | |
| \$100,000 | TOTAL |
| \$100,000 | Design Workshops and Community Engagement |
| Deliverables | Concept and Schematic Design; Illustrative plan, section, elevation, and perspective drawings; Implementation Phasing Plan; Cost Estimates; Funding Analysis; Maintenance and Operations Roles and Responsibilities Agreement; Robust Community Engagement Plan |